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## THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

ing banks, and in so doing they throw the whole scheme out of harmony. I would advise the inexperienced to study well the treatment of water under different aspects by masters of known repute; they will find the knowledge thus gained of great use to them.

Kindly I would ask my readers not to be discouraged by apparent failure in first attempts, but to persevere steadily, and after a time when comparing their latest with their earlier efforts, I venture to predict that they will find sufficient encouragement to cheer them on their way to still greater proficiency.

### CARPET DESIGNS.

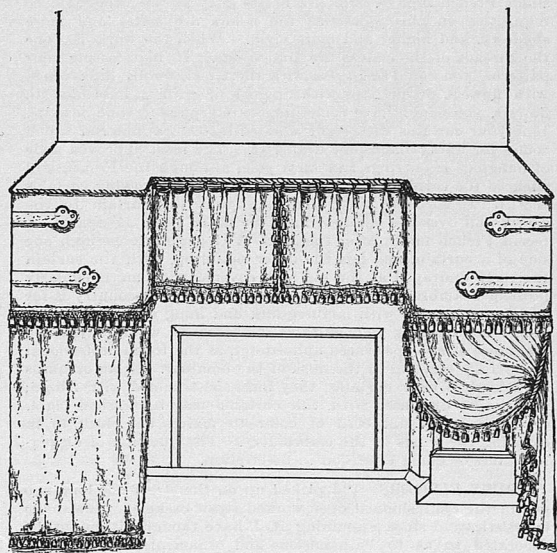
**T**HE multitude of carpet designs turned out each successive season illustrate the versatility brought to bear on this branch of art. In addition to securing novelty and pleasing effects the manufacturer and designer have to gauge, as it were, in advance the tendencies of public taste. Many influences operate to frame and shape this concurrent taste, some of them traceable, others obscure. There is constant action and reaction between the public and art. Ordinarily any decided changes of style are gradually developed, and thus the golden mean of change is found. A few of the leading principles underlying carpet design may here be glanced at.

A delicate style of rendering the forms in addition to a correct balance and scale of parts, with a harmonious combination of colors are unfailing characteristics of ornamentation when good. For repetition those forms are best which are not in themselves subjects of prominent interest. Such are the simple geometrical or rigid conventionalized figures seen in eastern rugs, their very simplicity and absolute unsuggestiveness having a certain quiescent effect however often repeated; indeed, they are only saved from tameness by the strength of the contrast of the colors and touches of brilliance; after all, they appear best as foils to our more artistic creations. The extreme views formerly held as to the extent to which natural forms such as flowers and foliage must be conventionalized to justify their appearance in carpet designs have been generally foregone; there is sufficient conventionalism in the difference of aspect resulting from the nature of the material, mode of working and the freedom accorded to the designer of introducing on occasion other than natural colors. In a wreath of flowers the arrangement itself is artificial. There is again much tasteful ornamentation that cannot be traced to a distinct source; it serves its purpose if graceful and suitable in stimulating the fancy of the beholder. Geometric rules undoubtedly underlie effective grouping, but it is not necessary for a satisfactory design that this element should be apparent. It even consists with apparent irregularity, where returning forms occupy different relative positions, as if disposed at the caprice of the designer. In the forms that contribute to a pattern details should be carefully subordinated to leading lines. The right proportioning of interspaces is quite as important as good arrangement of color. As to the colors, an undue accumulation of these will only result in crude effects, producing a certain restlessness of aspect. Marvels of beauty in design are producible with only a few colors, variations of tints being always available. Similarly, with an excess of detail in form, the design will lose character and become meaningless. With the commoner or cheaper descriptions of carpets, the endeavor to disguise the character of the material often leads to the fussiest kinds of patterns; the carpets, in such case, are worried all over. Subdued and well balanced compositions, showing breadth and repose, constitute the triumphs of art. This is not to say that with the more brilliant furnishing of interiors that prevails, a large proportion of carpet designs may not display luminous colors; such colors need not be dark or unduly warm; some of the lightest hues are characterized by extreme vivacity. Whilst the borders of carpets should always be darker than the rest of the surface, the less that gradated hues are introduced the better, as rendering them more distinctive. The introduction into a border of some of the colors of a general pattern draws attention to and more fully emphasizes the corresponding colors in the latter, a circumstance that constitutes a serviceable artistic resource. Very pleasing and effective contrasts between the treatment of the border and the field are secured by dividing it into two parallel bands, each with separate designs, such as flowers and arabesque work. There are two modes of regarding a carpet as a work of art. The one relates to the way in which the objects depicted are sought to be shown, embracing composition, color, light and shade and other technical qualities; the second is the ideal view that concerns the associations suggested, and the sensational or other pleasurable effects induced.

Brilliant colors in great quantity are by no means necessary for rich effects; the expert designer reserves them for heightening touches. When used in profusion the eyes refuse to recognize their value and quickly becomes wearied; notwithstanding

all the brilliance there is a certain heavy effect, the exact reverse being the case with colors that are delicate and full of light. The greatest proof of good coloring is a pleasant sense of warmth and breadth, a perception of the general effect of the hues rather than their detailed display. Where the minutiae of color is praised, the probability is that the designer has committed some blunder. Merely to touch upon the point of artistic correctness as between color of ground and figures, it may be mentioned as a key to the whole science of harmonious contrasts that a red orange is suitable to a bluish green ground, a blue purple to yellow orange, and a reddish purple to yellowish green, orange being the contrasting color of blue, red of green and purple of yellow. Figures of purple, or red, or brown will be well displayed on a blue gray ground; pearl blue or turtle dove gray on light gray; primrose silver yellow on light coral red, carnation or lakey red on silvery green; a greenish hue on ground of light neutral blue. Neutral grays and also transparent browns are properly favorite grounds with designers. Brown serves as shade for all colors, and also gives support to cool colors. Subdued tones which represent the diminishment of light ordinarily appear to more advantage than strong and vivid colors. They more readily admit of harmonious blendings and are not apt to pall the sense of sight. Green obtains its best effect by juxtaposition with pale colors, provided the latter are sufficiently bright. When colors are in contact that lie near to each other in the chromatic scale, they are usually wanting in strength and force; such combinations are the resort of timid designers to secure harmony. Good combinations may be formed of purplish violet, bluish green and orange; of bluish violet, green and vermilion; of turquoise blue, yellow and purple; violet and light rose color, deep blue and golden brown; chocolate and light blue, deep red and gray, maroon and warm green, deep blue and pink, chocolate and pea-green, maroon and deep blue, claret and buff, black. Whatever the colors employed, the bases of due proportion, not less important in color than in form, must be recognized to secure for designs any decisive charms.

**T**AKING the work up as a pastime, ladies may advantageously and at their leisure engage in making freize ornaments for walls otherwise bare, such as cinque cento ornaments or wreaths of flowers. Owing to the nature of the material, the designs may be carried out with the utmost delicacy, rivalling, indeed, the most costly carving with its elaborate undercutting. The wreaths may be made so light as to have scarcely appreciable weight. Such apparent weight as to seem to need to be strongly sustained is always a drawback to attached ornaments. These may be readily picked out in gold and colors. As a memento of individual skill good leather work, whether on walls, center of panels, toilet boxes or picture frames, will always be pleasing.



MANTEL DRAPERY IN SILK AND PLUSH, BY W. A. BROCK.

The top of the board is to be covered in satin, the square valance in satin with plush bands or hinges, the small curtains in center of plush made so that if there is a fire underneath they can be parted. The lower curtains are also of plush with loops so they can be dropped, as seen in the engraving.